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DEPARTMENT OF STATE
WASHINGTON

MESSAGE

February 13, 1982

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Dear Gene:

Thank you for your letter to the Secretary of February 4 enclosing the ACDA draft on the Middle East Nuclear Weapons Free Zone and other Middle East arms control issues.

I think a full analysis by ACDA of the concept of a Middle East Nuclear Weapons Free Zone (MENWFZ) would be a useful step toward the development of U.S. policy on that issue. However, your first draft, stimulating though it was, raised a number of fundamental questions.

Attempting, for example, to use Israeli concessions on the nuclear issue as a trade-off to obtain Arab concessions on the peace process seems to me to be doomed from the start. A strong suggestion that runs through the draft is that the Arabs are so actively worried about Israeli nuclear proliferation that they would be prepared to trade concessions in the peace process for a diminution of that threat. This I believe is putting the cart before the horse. While Arabs and Israelis are quite obviously concerned about each other's nuclear potential, the dynamics of the peace process are far more immediate and important to them.

To a certain extent of course, we already take the peace process into consideration when making arms sales decisions. To go beyond that and apply more stringent controls on weapons we provide friendly countries such as Saudi Arabia, Jordan and others would, I am afraid, be severely counter-productive and damage our priority efforts to build security against Soviet or regional threats to the key nations of the region. Ironically, such stringent controls might even stimulate Arab nuclear ambitions.

State Dept. review completed.

The Honorable
Eugene V. Rostow,
Director,
United States Arms Control
and Disarmament Agency.

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I think the general analysis in the first part of the ACDA draft makes a useful start in describing some of the issues of the area. I would therefore suggest, Gene, that your people put together another draft which concentrates as a first step on the MENWFZ, per se, and on its implications for U.S. policy in the context of regional realities. We would be glad to look at such a draft.

With best regards,

Sincerely,



Walter J. Stoessel, Jr.
Acting Secretary

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